

On Semantic Features Of Sentence-Form Metaphors In English And Uzbek

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the semantic features of sentence-form metaphors in English and Uzbek. Unlike word-level metaphor, where figurative meaning is confined to a single lexeme, sentence-form metaphor arises from the predicative relations between the subject, predicate, and object of a sentence, so that figurative meaning emerges from the sentence as a whole. The study analyzes the semantic mechanisms of meaning transfer, including personification and the objectification of abstract concepts. It then compares how these features appear in English and Uzbek examples. The results may contribute to comparative metaphor studies and may be useful in literary translation and linguopoetic analysis.

KEYWORDS: Sentence-form metaphor; semantic features; predication; semantic transfer; comparative analysis; English; Uzbek.

INTRODUCTION

Whereas metaphor in linguistics was previously analyzed mainly at the lexical level, that is, within a single word or phrase, it now attracts attention because it can manifest itself in the form of an entire sentence and displays distinctive features there. Sentence-form metaphors are distinguished by their complex semantic-syntactic nature and their cognitive mechanisms. Accordingly, they are not merely a means of embellishing speech but an important key to comprehending and evaluating reality through language. This is because, in a sentence-form metaphor, the subject, the action, and its object are linked to one another and form a small scene. For this reason, such a metaphor has broader descriptive potential than word-level metaphor and, as a result, occupies a significant place in the composition of a literary work.

Despite growing interest in this phenomenon, its terminology remains unsettled. In particular, the term “sentence-form metaphor” is not used as a single, fixed term by all researchers in world metaphor studies. Sentence-level manifestations of metaphor are addressed through such notions as the metaphorical statement in the work of M.Black [2] and the metaphorical utterance in the views of J.Searle [7]. P.Ricoeur interpreted metaphor not as a property of the individual word but as a semantic phenomenon arising at the sentence level: in his view, metaphorical meaning emerges through predication, that is, through the interaction of elements within the sentence [6]. D.Davidson, by contrast, rejected the idea that metaphor has a special “metaphorical meaning,” arguing that its force lies in prompting the addressee to see new relations between things rather than in changing the meaning of words [3].

A cognitive perspective was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson, whose conceptual metaphor theory shows that metaphor is present in everyday thought itself [5]. Kövecses further

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developed this theory by examining the universal and culture-specific aspects of conceptual metaphors and the role of bodily experience and social environment [4]. In Russian linguistics, Arutyunova described metaphor as a mechanism by which people understand and recategorize the world [1], while Teliya studied it in close connection with the national worldview and linguocultural content [8]. Taken together, these approaches provide an important foundation for understanding the sentence-form metaphor.

Building on this foundation, the present article aims to elucidate the semantic features of sentence-form metaphors in English and Uzbek. By comparing the two languages, it seeks to identify the similarities and differences in how the metaphorical meaning is formed.

Analysis

The following examples illustrate the semantic features of sentence-form metaphors in Uzbek and English. Each example is analyzed in terms of the semantic mechanism that produces the metaphorical meaning and the underlying conceptual mapping. Although the metaphorical focus in each example is a single verb or verb phrase, the figurative meaning arises only when this verb combines with its subject and object. For this reason, the examples are treated as sentence-form rather than word-level metaphors.

1. “Tun qishloqni yutdi”. (The night swallowed the village.)

Semantics: The verb “yutmoq” requires an animate subject and a concrete, swallowable object. Here the subject is an inanimate temporal phenomenon and the object is a large spatial entity, so the selectional restrictions are violated and the literal reading is blocked. The metaphorical focus is the verb yutdi; the frame (tun, qishloqni) is literal. The figurative meaning emerges only at the sentence level, through predication.

Mapping: NIGHT IS A DEVOURING CREATURE (with personification). Source domain: swallowing. Target domain: darkness covering the village. Transferred features: total enclosure, disappearance from view, overwhelming force.

2. “The night crept into the room”.

Semantics: The verb to creep requires an animate subject capable of slow, stealthy self-propelled movement, and into the room requires a goal that can be physically entered. Here the subject is an inanimate temporal phenomenon, so the selectional restrictions are violated and the literal reading is blocked. The metaphorical focus is the verb crept (together with the directional phrase into the room); the frame (the night, the room) is literal. The figurative meaning emerges only at the sentence level, through predication.

Mapping: NIGHT IS A STEALTHY MOVING CREATURE (with personification). Source domain: creeping into a space. Target domain: darkness gradually filling the room. Transferred features: slow progression, quietness, unnoticed approach, gradual takeover of space.

Examples 1 and 2 are based on the same “night is a living being” mapping, but they profile different aspects of it. Tun qishloqni yutdi stresses suddenness and totality, while The night

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crept into the room stresses gradualness and stealth. The difference lies in the verb chosen, not in the language.

3. "Daraxtlar bir-biriga nimadir so'zlardi". (The trees were saying something to one another.)

Semantics: The verb so'zlamoq (to speak) requires an animate human subject and a human addressee. Here the subject is daraxtlar (trees), an inanimate natural entity, so the selectional restrictions are violated and the literal reading is blocked. The metaphorical focus is the verb so'zlardi; the frame (daraxtlar, bir-biriga, nimadir) is literal in its lexical meaning. The figurative meaning emerges only at the sentence level, through predication. The reciprocal pronoun bir-biriga ('to one another') makes the trees both speakers and addressees, so the sentence depicts a dialogue rather than a one-way utterance.

Mapping: TREES ARE PEOPLE IN CONVERSATION (with personification). Source domain: conversation between people. Target domain: the rustling of leaves. Transferred features: low volume, continuity, mutual exchange, a sense of hidden meaning.

4. "The wind whispered through the trees".

Semantics: The verb to whisper requires an animate human subject capable of producing quiet, speech-like sound. Here the subject is the wind, an inanimate natural phenomenon, so the selectional restrictions are violated and the literal reading is blocked. The metaphorical focus is the verb whispered; the frame (the wind, through the trees) is literal. The figurative meaning emerges only at the sentence level, through predication. The verb adds manner (soft, hushed, intimate sound), and the phrase through the trees specifies the place where the sound is heard, so the sentence also evokes an auditory image.

Mapping: THE WIND IS A SPEAKING PERSON (with personification). Source domain: whispering. Target domain: the soft rustling sound of wind in foliage. Transferred features: low volume, continuity, softness, a sense of communication or secrecy.

Examples 3 and 4 convert the same natural scene (wind and rustling leaves) into speech, but they distribute the roles differently. In English, the wind is the speaker and the trees are the medium; in Uzbek, the trees are both speaker and listener, and the wind is not mentioned. This shows that the same source domain (speech) can be projected onto different elements of the same scene.

5. "Uning umidlari kulga aylandi". (His hopes turned to ashes.)

Semantics: The verb aylanmoq ('to turn into') expresses a change of state and is compatible with abstract subjects in general. The violation arises from the combination of subject and result. The subject umidlari ('his hopes') is an abstract, non-physical entity, while kul ('ash') is the residue of a burned physical object, so hopes cannot literally become ash. The literal reading is blocked. The metaphorical focus is kulga aylandi, and the frame (uning umidlari) is literal. The figurative meaning emerges at the sentence level, through predication. The source domain, burning, is not mentioned in the sentence.

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Mapping: HOPES ARE COMBUSTIBLE OBJECTS; THE LOSS OF HOPE IS BURNING. Source domain: the burning of an object until only ash remains. Target domain: the complete failure of hopes. Transferred features: total destruction, irreversibility, loss of value, worthless remainder.

6. "Her words wounded him".

Semantics: The verb to wound normally requires a physical agent (a weapon, a person acting with a weapon) and a patient whose body is physically injured. Here the subject is her words, an abstract, non-physical entity, and the injury is psychological, not bodily. The selectional restrictions are violated, so the literal reading is blocked. The metaphorical focus is the verb wounded; the frame (her words, him) is literal. The figurative meaning emerges at the sentence level, through predication. The patient is an animate person (him), but the part affected is not named: the reader infers that it is the person's feelings.

Mapping: EMOTIONAL HARM IS PHYSICAL INJURY; WORDS ARE WEAPONS. Source domain: wounding with a weapon. Target domain: hurting someone's feelings through speech. Transferred features: pain, damage, vulnerability, the roles of aggressor and victim, possible lasting effects.

Examples 5 and 6 are conventional and rest on a physical source domain (burning, wounding) applied to an emotional target. In Example 5 the process is implied and only the result is named (kulga aylandi), while in Example 6 the process itself is named by the verb.

Taken together, the examples show that the verb plays the central role in these metaphors. It creates the semantic conflict with its subject or object and determines which features of the source domain are transferred to the target.

Conclusion

This article examined six sentence-form metaphors in English and Uzbek. In all of them, the verb does not fit its subject or object, so we read the sentence figuratively, and the figurative meaning comes from the sentence as a whole. Two main types were found: personification, where natural things such as the night, the wind, and trees act like living beings, and objectification, where abstract things such as hopes and words are treated like physical objects. English and Uzbek form these metaphors in the same way and differ mainly in details, such as the choice of verb and the development of the image. Because the study is based on a small number of examples, a larger corpus is needed to confirm these findings.

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